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WHY DIE?

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A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF THE BIBLE'S
LAST WORD ABOUT DEATH

BY

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TO ALL PHYSICIANS, METAPHYSICIANS,
TRAINED NURSES, AND ALL OTHERS IN ANY
WAY ENGAGED IN A HEALING MINISTRY,
THIS BOOK IS ESPECIALLY DEDICATED.

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INTRODUCTION

This book is my interpretation of Revelation XXI: 1-7.

Since I shall use the American Standard Version, more commonly called the "Revised Version", and since every Bible reader does not own a Bible in this Version, I will start my series by quoting in full the passage we are to study:

"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth are passed away; and the sea is no more.

"And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband.

"And I heard a great voice out of the throne, saying, Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he shall dwell with them, and they shall be his peoples, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God; and he shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death shall be no more; neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore; the first things are passed away.

"And he that sitteth on the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he saith, Write; for these words are faithful and true. And he said unto me, They are come to pass. I am the Alpha

and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.

“He that overcometh shall inherit these things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.”

It is rather significant that the Bible's first word about death occurs in next to its first chapter, and its last word about death in next to its last chapter. I take the ground that the Bible's last word about death repeals its first word on that subject; that although a new dispensation in human history was inaugurated there on the Isle of Patmos nineteen hundred years ago by divine decree, the human race as a whole and even the Christian Church have continued in the Old Testament dispensation inaugurated in the Garden of Eden; that the human race can never attain its intended goal on this earth until it steps out of the old dispensation into the new, abolishing physical death and all the woe and misery incident thereto.

The main reasons for this long delay in entering the new dispensation will be discussed fully.

A big task, undertaken by a feeble instrument? Even so, it is undertaken. It is in obedience to a conviction I have carried for more than half my life, that I undertake the task. Paul had a “heavenly vision” and was not disobedient to it. That Patmos vision John had has long haunted me. I must not be disobedient to it.

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WHY DIE?

I

THE LAST WORD REPEALS THE FIRST WORD

I mean, of course, that the last word in the Bible about death repeals its first word on that subject. The same Divine Being uttered both words. Why was the Patmos decree spoken at all if it was not meant to undo the effects of the Eden decree?

The Eden decree did reduce to dust the physical organism, in time, of every human being we have any record of except two, Enoch and Elijah. If this painful fact was not to be removed from human experience by the Patmos decree, again I ask, what could have been the purpose of the Patmos decree—"And death shall be no more"?

It is not an uncommon practice of human legislative bodies to enact a measure and at a later time repeal it. Sometimes the repeal is effected by a new measure containing the provision that all laws in conflict with this measure are hereby repealed. And so I contend that the Bible's last word about death not only repeals its first word about death, but all the words on that subject between its first and last words—that is to say, all words in conflict with its last word. If I am reminded that the Bible

says, "It is appointed unto man once to die", I say yes, but that is not its last word on the subject.

It is also a common human custom for a man to write a will, and later write another and different one. When it comes to probating the man's will the court will admit only the one bearing the latest date.

Going back to the legislative body illustration, such bodies sometimes attach an "emergency clause", putting the measure into immediate effect. Well, we find just such an emergency clause attached to this Patmos decree under consideration. After John was commanded to write the words he had heard out of the throne declaring that death should be no more, it was immediately added, "They are come to pass". This is the emergency clause appended to the Patmos decree.

Then why did the decree not go into immediate effect? This will be the theme for our next chapter.

I feel prompted to ask the indulgence of my readers for a further personal word. I have said in my introductory statement that this Patmos vision had long haunted me, and that I was trying not to be disobedient to the heavenly vision. This may have made the impression on readers who do not know me that I had not previously written or spoken as I am now writing. I have in a more or less fragmentary way for many years back. But now I feel I must do so in a more thorough manner. I would not seem fanatical, but I do somehow feel, reverently speaking, that the command to John is now made to me—"Write".

II

“PASSED AWAY”—“COME TO PASS”

“The first things are passed away”. The words declaring them “passed away” and the beginning of a new dispensation, from which death, sorrow and pain are to be absent, “are come to pass”.

It was not said that the existing state of things would pass away some time in the future, and the words decreeing a new era would come to pass some time in the future, but that they had already “come to pass”.

Here we find the foundation principle in all the teachings of Jesus. He told us that when we prayed for anything to believe we already had it and then we would have it. He acted on that principle when he raised Lazarus from the dead. “Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me”. He did not wait to say this after Lazarus had “come forth”, been loosed and let go, but before he commanded him to come forth.

So we see, in the working of that fundamental principle, that things come to pass in the invisible before they come to pass in the visible. In the invisible, Jesus saw Lazarus out of his grave and on his feet before he spoke the word that translated the invisible into the visible. It took but a few mo-

ments to deliver this one man from physical death. It is taking a few millenia to deliver a whole race. But the same principle is at work, and it will ultimately work out into visible actuality that which has come to pass in the invisible on a large scale the same as it did on a small scale at the tomb of Lazarus.

What significance has time in God's calendar, anyhow? With Him "a day is as a thousand years and a thousand years as a day". "He that inhabiteth eternity" is all the time working out into the manifest, the visible, that which had previously "come to pass" in the invisible. Calculated by God's calendar, this Patmos decree has been on the job less than two of God's days. What matter, then, if so far no member of our race has as yet escaped physical death? Does that prove that the eternal principle which translates invisible realities into visible actualities is not at work? In our next chapter we will produce evidence that it has been and is at work, even though concrete results are not all we may have felt they should have been.

This entire Book of Revelation is filled with the workings of this principle. It starts out with the promise to reveal things that must "shortly come to pass". All of them came to pass "shortly" in the invisible, and I think most of them in the visible within a very few years after the Book was written. I once read a very interesting book by a Mr. Warren, taking the ground that all the prophecies in that Book have been fulfilled. Mr. Floyd Hitch-

cock, the "radio pastor" of Springfield, Mo., is giving a series of Sunday morning talks on the Book. He is just well started, but so far has not changed my agreement with Mr. Warren. I think he is a very sincere man, and incidentally doing a good work through the radio and his magazine, but I believe he is in error in setting forth certain Bible prophecies as about to be fulfilled which have already been fulfilled in the centuries gone by. I shall not try to go into particulars in these articles, but will state my own interpretation of present world events. In general terms, I believe the commotion among the nations, like all similar ones since the Patmos decree, are caused by the pressure of things that have come to pass in the invisible, to come to pass in the visible. This pressure of the new dispensation to externalize itself in human affairs gets stronger as time goes on, and the resistance of the old order against the advent of the new also becomes stronger. The present clash between the old and the new may be illustrated by what is called a "palimpsest", a picture taken over another picture on the same card. Perhaps the first picture had been but partly developed when the second impression was made, and in developing the second impression the features of the first one also become prominent and the two together make a conglomerated scene.

Perhaps a better illustration can be drawn from the operation of the magic lantern and the stereoptican slides. The cards are fed into the machine and the picture is enlarged on a curtain. Some-

times a card hangs in the mechanism, and fails to pass out as the next card is fed in behind it. This makes an inharmonious scene on the screen.

Thus does the Old Testament dispensation stubbornly hang on while the new one started at Patmos pushed hard to externalize itself in human affairs. The push of the new upon the old is causing both cards to crumple, so we have world confusion.

In times like the present there are always teachers telling us we are to witness certain kinds of disasters, some of which may materialize, but most of them probably will not. Jesus foretold such world disturbances as we now have, but told us that wars and rumors of wars would come and go before his coming again, so we shall do well to maintain a calm composure and meet all problems in the Christian way. I am writing a book I feel to be very important to Christian people. I aim to stick as close as possible to the main question—"Why Die"—for I sincerely believe that Christians ought not be dying in this twentieth Christian century. The wicked of course must die, but if the righteous would give life instead of death the right-of-way in their lives, the kingdom of God on earth would make much more rapid advances.

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III

NEW HEAVEN, NEW EARTH, NEW JERUSALEM

"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth". Some translation I have seen gives a marginal reading, "saw heaven new and earth new". I examined the Greek text and found it would admit of such a rendering. With either reading that is about the real meaning. The new conditions described—death, sorrow and pain no more—would truly make the earth below and the heavens above take on a new aspect.

"And the sea is no more". There is doubtless some important meaning in this statement not now readily understood. Our first thought is of some gigantic cataclysm, rolling the mountain chains into the oceans, filling them up and giving much more land room for earth's human population. It is conceivable, however, that the genius of man may yet find some magic chemical process that will congeal the waters of the sea and make it "no more".

As to the new Jerusalem, that may in some measure be taken as a model for the world capital city of the future. And if the sea does disappear, and the earth's climate modified, the site of that world Capital might well be at the north pole, the "top of the world", visible through perfected television

from every point on this "terrestrial ball". But the point I wish especially to emphasize in this chapter is that John saw this new Jerusalem "coming down from God out of heaven". This clearly means that heavenly ideals are to rule on this earth. The general interpretation by Christians, when any at all is ventured, is that the ideal conditions depicted in the passage we are studying pertain to some future heavenly realm to be reached by dying, and that "death shall be no more" after everybody has died. It is a bit difficult to account for such a fanciful interpretation when everything here said about this "holy city" is definitely applied to this earth. Not only has this new Jerusalem already come down out of heaven from God, but God himself has come along with it, and seeks to find a tabernacle with men. We Christians have for centuries been pining and longing to die and go to God in heaven, while He has come to earth to find a "tabernacle with men". I think all will accept it as a self-evident truth that a living human body in which God dwells should never die as long as He is permitted to dwell in it. Through lack of proper appreciation of the body, the average Christian has admitted God into his heart but has not submitted to Him the body for His tabernacle. When this is done, definitely, consciously, we will not think we have to die to go to heaven. In humiliating contrast with what is here said about God coming down to find His tabernacle with men, think of some of the hymns we have sung—I shudder to recall that I ever sang them.

This one for instance, the last stanza of "My Soul be on Thy Guard". It is a splendid hymn until we reach that last stanza :

"Then persevere till death
Shall bring thee to thy God.
He'll take thee at thy parting breath
To His divine abode".

Another grand old hymn is pretty much spoiled for me by its frequent use of the word "death":

"Faith of our fathers, holy faith,
We will be true to thee till death".

One wonders if we are not still to be true after death. This objection may seem just a quibble, and it is, compared to the greater objection, and that is the use of the word in the chorus of the hymn, and hence oft repeated, amounts to an admission that death is inevitable, and in the light of the Scripture passage we are studying, I cannot any more concede that death is inevitable. I have amended the above lines, so when I am singing it with a congregation, when we come to those last two lines, under my breath I change it thus :

"Faith of our fathers, hold thy sway,
We will be true to thee for aye"—

—that is, forever. True to the faith forever, not merely "till death".

I realize that in criticizing hymns in which Christians have found solace in sorrow, I am treading on holy ground. But I feel so profoundly that the glorious era set forth in the passage we are studying can never come without human cooperation, that I feel that every one so believing should "cry aloud and spare not".

Yes, the new Jerusalem is here on earth, standing in the invisible ether, "Four Square", as described by John. Twelve foundations of precious stones, walls of jasper, gates of pearl, streets paved with gold. Though not aware of it, we of the United States are probably storing up gold for that purpose right now, down yonder in the caverns of Kentucky. We think we need it for money, but cannot use it as such. We of the human race are yet to build that "City Beautiful". And John says we are to "bring the glory and honor of the nations into it". Every beautiful building we now erect, for any purpose, is due to an effort by that invisible city to externalize itself. I first saw the Library of Congress when it was nearly new. I wrote at the time that it made me think of the new Jerusalem.

Instead of wanting to die to go to that new Jerusalem we should strive to stay alive and help build it, right here on this earth planet. If we die and leave the earth, I believe we'll have to come back, either by birth or by resurrection, in order to enter into that "Holy City". According to St. Paul, at the time of the resurrection there will still be on this earth a living race. And that living race will

not suddenly die to join the dead, but the dead will be raised to join the living race. If, then, we can stay alive until that "last day" we will lose nothing worth while—unless, perchance, we need a good long rest. Paul saw all this as happening "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye". It would necessarily look that way to him, even if in reality it was to take long ages. Of this more in a later chapter.

IV

"THE PLACE OF DEATH IN EVOLUTION"

I take for this chapter's heading the title of a book written several years ago by Dr. Newman Smythe. A good many people have the belief that the word "evolution" means only the theory that man is evolved from the monkey, and not a special creation by the Creator of the universe. I am not here discussing that theory, but will state in passing that if it is ever proved that man had an animal ancestor, that would not make him any the less a special creation by the Almighty. When it was said by one person of the Godhead to another, "Let us make man in our image", it does not seem to me unreasonable to suppose God would take one of his creatures in the animal kingdom with a physical form approaching what He wanted man to have, stand that animal up on his hind legs, then by a special creative act impart to that animal His own image.

Such a process, it seems to me, would be as divine as to take a batch of fresh clay out of which to make man. I say "fresh clay", because if God did choose to fashion an anthropoid ape into the first man, that ape had been originally formed from the dust of the ground. The Bible writers skipped a

lot of details as to processes of creation. They had to make their writings of service to man. They often condense an epoch into an epigram.

Of course those who believe in that particular phase of evolution, that man sprang from the lower animals, do give death an important "place". I read Dr. Smythe's book some years ago, but do not remember whether or not he accepted that phase of evolution.

But if he did, he used the word "evolution" in a much broader sense. There is going on through the ages an evolution of consciousness as well as of animal forms. It is more particularly in this sense, pertaining to consciousness, that I use the word "evolution" in this chapter. In this use of it, death does have an important "place".

Just before Jesus was crucified he said to his disciples, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now". In none of them was consciousness sufficiently evolved to enable them to understand and to utilize the truths he would like to have told them. One of these was that his redemptive work, through his teaching, death and resurrection, was that death was to "be no more". He had indeed told them that he was the "bread of life", and that whoever ate of that bread should live forever, that if even a dead man were to believe in him he should live, and that a living man believing in him should never die. It is not in order here to assert that he referred to spiritual death, for when he called himself the bread that came down from

heaven, he added, "Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness and are dead". "But any one eating the bread" he was giving for the life of the world should not die. So it is clear that he was here promising deliverance from physical death.

But he who "knew all things" knew it was not the proper time to tell his followers "death should be no more". He knew that his own death was to involve, sooner or later, the death of every one of them, and the converts made by their preaching were to suffer fierce persecution for years to come. Yes, at that time a decree that death should be no more would have seemed the height of mockery.

But although his disciples were "not able to bear" some truth at the time Jesus was about to leave them, he told them he would send them "the Spirit of truth" whose mission would be to guide them into "all truth". This Spirit of truth did come on the day of Pentecost, shortly after the ascension of the risen Christ into heaven.

After about forty years of the guidance of this Spirit of truth, when, we have reason to believe, all of the apostles except John had suffered death, the ascended Christ descended and paid a special visit to John in banishment for his preaching, to deliver in person a special message. That special message closed with the announcement of a new dispensation in human history, in which death should be no more, followed by a glowing description of the new Jerusalem that had come down from heaven to earth, and of the river of life and the tree of life, the

leaves of which were to be for "the healing of the nations".

So the last chapter of the Bible is much like the first one, a grand pæan and psalm of life. Death enters in next to the first chapter, and goes out in next to the last chapter. If we truly believe the Bible to be inspired of God, we are also warranted in believing the arrangement of its books was guided by the Spirit of truth as truly as were the writers of its books in producing their contents. In other words, we are to count it no accident that the decree ending the long reign of death comes near the close of the last book. Because of this, I have insisted that the Bible's last word about death should be taken as repealing its first word on that subject—and of all its words on death between its first and last that are in conflict with the last.

Such words as "he that liveth and believeth in me shall never die" are not repealed by that Patmos decree, because they are not in conflict with that decree.

We may admit, then, that death did have a "place in evolution", even in the human race, up to the time of the Patmos decree. The poet Bryant sang the praise of death because it removed the unfit members of our race. But as long as we let it remove the fittest along with the unfittest, where is the gain?

V

"HE SPAKE AND IT WAS DONE"

Yes, in the invisible. But it was a long, long time before "the things which do appear" really did appear. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth". But after the earth was created it was still "without form, and void", we do not know for how many ages. But it finally did take form. Geology gives us the evidence that it was many ages in reaching its present form. And it is still undergoing modification of form.

Take Niagara Falls, for instance. It is about seven miles down the gorge to the mouth of the Niagara River, and geologists tell us the Falls have cut that gorge at the rate of about a foot a year. There are five thousand two hundred eighty feet in a mile. Multiply this number by seven and you get approximately the age of Niagara Falls. In some recent years they have receded more than a foot. The next to the last time I saw them was in 1929. Some time during the winter of 1930-31 it was reported that a great ledge of rock had broken off the edge on the American side. I went back the next summer to see the change in their appearance. I could notice the change in form. Since that time

there has been a tumble-down from the cliff on the Canadian side.

But these big breaks from the cliffs do not come often, so we know the Falls have been a very long time in cutting that seven mile gorge.

And if it took so many eons to bring out the old heavens and the old earth, why be baffled by doubts just because it is taking what appears to us a long time to bring to full form the new heavens and the new earth that John saw at Patmos only nineteen hundred years ago? Why be baffled because after it was decreed that "death shall be no more" members of the human race went right on dying as if nothing had been said about it from the throne of God?

Since we see evolution working so slowly in the material realm, we ought not to expect it to make great speed in the unfoldment of human consciousness. It received a mighty quickening from the teaching of Jesus, but at the time of his departure from the world there were still some things his followers were not able to bear. One of these was that death should be no more. This decree was held back for a generation, and even then there was no immediate outward effect. Even the man commanded to write down the words died and "went the way of all the earth". But the emergency clause, "they are come to pass", was written along with the decree, and of course began immediately the work of bringing those words to pass in human experience and human affairs, though it would be difficult

to tell just when the first outward effects began to show. In accounting for the seemingly slow progress in doing away with death, quite a few facts have to be considered, foremost among them the force of habit.

VI

AGING AND DYING A RACE HABIT

There is no scientific reason for either. When we thoroughly learn this we will become ashamed of ourselves and quit both.

I will treat the aging habit later. I believe the dying habit is more deep seated, so continue now further to treat it.

When that Patmos decree was spoken from the throne, ordered written down as "faithful and true" and declared "come to pass", the dying habit in the human race was as old as the race. According to the Bible record, death was never in the divine plan for man, but had to be resorted to as an emergency measure when the newly created Adam failed to cooperate with his Creator. After many generations, a mighty Deliverer came to earth, repealed the ancient death decree, and started a new dispensation of the more abundant life. But so firmly fastened to the race was that chronic dying habit that it was a long time before the new life decree had any visible effect.

But the Spirit of truth, to whom was committed the interpretation of all the words of Christ, took into account the handicap of habit, and for generations death was permitted to continue, and was even

used for moral and spiritual ends. By the force of that old habit the death of the body was still considered inevitable, and Christian teachers used the certainty of death and the doom that would follow for all unbelievers to make converts to the Christian faith. This practice of what was in a sense literally frightening people into the kingdom came down to our own day. Luther and his fellow reformers used it, the Wesleys used it, George Whitfield and Jonathan Edwards, Moody and Sankey, "Sam" Jones and many other professional evangelists of more or less note all used it—and we might name "Billy" Sunday as one who made a super use of it.

All of which means that the Spirit of truth through all generations revealed to believers only as much truth as they were "able to bear". So far as I recall, in my reading of Church history none of the great preachers of the early Church, nor of the Middle Ages nor of modern times, has called attention to that Patmos decree we are now studying, at any rate with any such interpretation as I am giving it—that is, that when we fully know the truth that Jesus said would make us free, complete redemption will mean "the redemption of the body" as well as of the soul, and Christians will no longer die and be buried or cremated.

At this point I may be asked why I think people are even now "able to bear" the teaching that here and now they may overcome bodily death. It is a fair question.

I cannot here give all the reasons why I so think,

but for one general reason, it begins to look to me as though most people were not going to be able much longer to bear anything short of that teaching. The old consolations seem more and more to fail to satisfy, especially in the case of parents who lose their children in death. I wrote words to this effect in a book nearly forty years ago, and I feel the truth of the statement more now than I did then.

In other words, I believe death has done all it can do to further race progress, and that there is every indication that the Spirit of truth is trying diligently now to make it clear that the time is now fully come for such teaching, and, better still for such practicing. I have pointed out how that Spirit has permitted partial truths to hold sway because of the incomplete evolution of human consciousness and human intelligence. Not only did that Spirit fail to lead preachers to call attention to the Patmos decree, but even permitted an incorrect translation of a part of the passage we are studying to go uncorrected in our English Bible for nearly three centuries. In the King James Version of 1611 we find this imperfect rendering in this passage in Rev. XXI: 1-7, "And he said unto me, It is done". The Revised Version of 1881 renders it, "They are come to pass". And this latter is the correct translation of the Greek text. "It is done" following the statement, "These words are faithful and true", is not only ungrammatical but fails entirely to bring out the fact that those words decreeing that "death shall be no more" had already come to pass. I read this

passage in the Revised Version many times through many years before I noted what a world of difference between the Old and New Versions in this one passage. As I view the matter, the Spirit of truth permitted this mistranslation to go uncorrected all those centuries because mankind was not yet able to bear the full disclosure that a correct translation would have made.

But if the truth needed to be partly concealed by a mistranslation up to 1881, why was not the Patmos decree itself just withheld till 1881? Because there was much preparatory work to be done, requiring several generations, before mankind could bear the full disclosure of the truth, and actually cease from dying. While we have no record of any one yet escaping death since the Patmos decree, people have lived longer since that decree than they did previously. In my own lifetime the average age has nearly doubled in length, rising from thirty to fifty nine years. The discoveries of Pasteur have saved the lives of millions of babies.

Not only has the average life increased, but the average length of the working part of each life increased. Mr. W. J. Cameron, in his Sunday evening talks in the Ford Motor hour has given some very interesting figures in this connection.

So far so good, but I believe the time has come when the goal aimed at by every Christian should be not to die at all.

VII

“SLOW OF HEART TO BELIEVE”

In the preceding two or three chapters I fear I may have seemed to be framing up “alibis” for people who have continued to stay in an old dispensation when they should have entered the new one ushered in at Patmos nineteen hundred years ago. I have tried to explain why people have continued to die since the Patmos decree was declared in effect. But an explanation is not always an excuse.

After all is said, I fear the real reason why people continue to die is expressed in our chapter heading, which is taken from part of a severe rebuke administered by the risen Christ as he walked with two of his disciples enroute to the village of Emmaus. The two did not recognize him when he joined in their company, and had a terrible tale of woe to tell him about what happened near Jerusalem three days before. He apparently let them talk uninterrupted until one of them said, “But we had hoped it had been he who should have redeemed Israel”. Then he broke in, “Oh foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the Scriptures have spoken”. He seemed to say, in effect, that it was a discredit to them not to have believed what the prophecies had said about him.

And I fear we as Christians are as deserving of an equally severe rebuke for not sooner believing those gloriously wonderful words on Patmos. His resurrection proved his mastery over death, and it is hard to understand that slowness of heart which has so long kept Christians from receiving the fullest benefits of that wonderful Patmos decree. Some reject that decree because they deem it "too good to be true". Others openly jeer at it. For nearly forty years I have been saying in sermons, lectures, books and other writings that Christians ought not now to be dying at all. Some boldly tell me *my* time will come. To such I say "Yes, and right now, though you do not so intend it, you are trying to make your prediction come true by your adverse suggestions". If it is in order to insert a personal word, I am willing to go on record as one who for most of a life of more than three score and ten has supremely desired to attain precisely the goal I am here advocating. I see no valid reason why I should not succeed, unless I fail to rise above the effects of the jeers above alluded to. The seven verse passage we are studying closes with the words, "He that overcometh shall inherit". Just how much may be implied in that word "overcometh", we may not know. It may involve high spiritual qualities not yet attained by us of this generation. We shall plan a chapter on that subject. All I can now say is that I am a candidate for immortality of "body, soul and spirit". And I confess I have in one sense a selfish interest in trying to make converts to that

doctrine, for I believe it will be easier to "overcome" if I can have the help of others to strengthen my faith. "In union there is strength".

In so far as divine decrees now figure in the situation, there is no more need for human beings to die than there was for American negroes to remain in slavery after President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation went into effect. Some of them did remain with their masters after their freedom was won, not knowing what else to do with themselves. Suppose they had all done so, down to the present time, refusing to believe they had ever been set free by the decree of the United States Government, through the pen of its president. Then we would have had a case somewhat parallel to the present spectacle of the entire human race holding itself subject to physical death for centuries after the Emancipation Proclamation went into effect.

"In so far as divine decrees figure", I have just said. The decree at Patmos repealed the decree at Eden, under which all mankind died because of the sin of Adam. But the inexorable law that the sin of each individual will cause that individual's death, sooner or later, unless that sin is repented of and forgiven—that law was not repealed at Patmos, and never could be anywhere through the eternities. None of the laws of nature affecting the human body was repealed at Patmos. Though freed from death by divine decree as such, the human race is still under the grim necessity of working out its own salvation. And I submit that this is big enough a

task for us, without piling on ourselves an ancient divine decree that was long ago lifted by a later divine decree if only we would not be so "slow of heart to believe what the Scriptures have spoken". In my humble judgment, the lifting of that now self-imposed sentence of death is all that now needs to be done in order to make very rapid progress in the overcoming of death.

The natural life instinct that is in every human being has driven us a long way on the road to immortal life here and now in spite of our unfortunate religious teaching about death. That life instinct drives us to the taking of great precautions in keeping pure the sources of water supply for our cities. But we go on dumping into the minds of our city dwellers erroneous religious teachings that have a worse effect in the long run than would a temporary impure water supply.

Slowness of heart to believe the Scriptures has registered some very direful effects on some religious nations. Those two disciples on the Emmaus road got off with a severe verbal rebuke from the Master. But the Jewish nation as a whole that refused to accept him as the Messiah long prophesied in their Scriptures have suffered greatly through all their history ever since, and are still suffering. We wonder if Christians are going to profit in this particular from what has happened to their Hebrew brethren? We shall do well to "search the Scriptures" diligently under the constant guidance of the Spirit of truth.

VIII

AS TO AGING AND ACCIDENT

Old age is sometimes alluded to as "an incurable disease". Once acquired, it may or may not be incurable. But supposing it curable, in this case as in all others, "prevention is better than cure". Strictly speaking, there is no old age in the animal kingdom. Our bodies are built and constantly renewed by the food we eat, and that is seldom more than a year old, even when we eat cold storage eggs. In some homes three generations eat together three times a day, taking food of precisely the same age. The children grow and thrive on it, while their parents and grandparents "grow old" on it. "Grow old" is a misnomer. We take on age symptoms and conditions by force of race habit, in spite of the young food we eat, mainly because we stop growing mentally. Not a single cell or atom in the whole make-up of the human body ever "grows old" or in any way becomes old. It has within itself a self-renewing process. And yet we somehow allow the aggregate of these cells to become an old and decrepit body—when said body is not killed off before it has had time to "grow old".

Dr. Alexis Carroll of the Rockefeller Institute has in his laboratory the heart of a chicken that is

still beating after the body of the fowl has been dead and disposed of for many years.

When St. Paul wrote, "Though our outward man perish, the inner man is renewed day by day," he set forth a great truth, but not the whole truth, for in reality the "outward man" is renewed day by day, and if it "perish" it is from causes psychological rather than physiological. As Dr. Eugene Lyman Fisk put it years ago, "we grow old and die because we expect to grow old and die". Since he wrote these words, Dr. Fisk has himself died. From what cause and at what age I do not remember, but he left evidence that he had not eradicated from his subconscious mind the expectation to die—some time. He was president of an organization called the "Life Extension Institute", the purpose of which was to lengthen individual human life by a few years, not to do away with death entirely.

As to death by accident, the basic cause of that is involved in the now unwarranted belief that the death of the human body is inevitable because of an ancient divine decree. If this belief could once be eradicated from the race subconscious mind, accidents would in time automatically cease. And such eradication will take place when we come to "believe all that the Scriptures have spoken". The Revelation passage we are now studying makes clear that the old death decree at Eden was repealed by a later decree at Patmos. We sometimes say of a person who goes through many accidents unhurt that he or she has a "charmed life". A surrender of that

fatalist belief that death is inevitable would soon make a "charmed life" for all. Therefore, in the words of Henry Ward Beecher applied to another belief, I say "take away the doctrine of the inevitableness of death".

Through endless years our bodies should stay
 young,
For constantly they are repaired, renewed
By grains and fruits from mother earth fresh
 sprung.
Can bodies become old fed on young food?

Since nature furnishes so much young food
To keep our bodies in a youthful state,
If we would keep our minds in youthful mood,
No doubt we could our youth perpetuate.

Begone, old age, your staying is devoid
Of anything akin to real cause.
Both you and death are doomed to be destroyed
By operation of life's higher laws.

IX

MORTICULTURE AND ITS BANEFUL FRUITS

No, it is not a typographical error. I do not mean Horticulture. That has to do with the fruits of gardens, farm and orchard, but few of which are baneful. I mean morticulture, very closely related to horticulture in derivation—only one letter different—but vastly different in the quality of fruit produced.

Morticulture. I have not looked in the dictionary. If it does not contain such a word it ought to, and it should be defined as the culture of disease and death germs. In morticulture beds, probably the deepest rooted and most prolific bearer of baneful fruits is the belief in the inevitableness of death. And probably the two most fertile culture beds for this vicious plant are to be found in two of our noblest institutions, namely, the Church and the Life Insurance Company. Neither of these noble institutions means to murder people, but some time, when psychology is better understood, especially that phase of it pertaining to the influence of the mind over the body, each of the two institutions mentioned will see that certain of their teachings make them virtually unintentional instruments of manslaughter. One of the most effective "talking points" for life insurance agents is the certainty and often the sud-

denness of death. "Legitimate business", truly, but morticulture none the less.

And the churches dwell on the brevity of life and the certainty of death to influence people to seek eternal life for their souls.

The sad feature of the whole present day situation is that the mental attitude of the mass of mankind makes the reign of death self-perpetuating. St. Paul said death is an enemy, and the organized Church ought to be fighting to destroy every enemy of the human race. Following a procedure which clearly makes death self-perpetuating, it is killing off its own soldiers, much as the famous General "Stonewall" Jackson is said to have been killed by his own soldiers.

The emphasis the Church places on death in its ritual, sermons and hymns amounts almost to a worship of death. It praises death as "the gate to endless joy", the "door into the larger life". At the same time it tells us that death is the penalty of sin. Taking the two opposite teachings together, the Theology of the Church virtually teaches, in the last analysis, that it is sin that takes us to heaven, for it is sin that causes death and "death is the gate to endless joy".

I justify myself in pointing out these inconsistencies only because of a deep rooted conviction that the supreme denouement, or goal, promised the human race can never be realized while the race mental attitude towards death continues as it now is—no resurrection of the dead, no inheriting of the earth by the righteous and the meek.

X

"THE LARGER LIFE"

What about that so-called "larger life" supposed to be entered by dying? I say "supposed", for I find no Scripture warrant for it. About all the Scripture assurance we have that the death of the body does not mean the complete annihilation of the conscious human ego is found in the statement by the Christ, "Fear not them which kill the body but cannot kill the soul". He did not treat death as if it meant an entrance into a larger life. In three recorded instances he called back persons who had died. He came to this world that its inhabitants "might have life and have it more abundantly". He came to bring that more abundant life to them here, not to send them or take them off to it through the door of death.

In regard to those he called back from death to resume earth life, it does not seem likely he would have called them back if they had really gone by death into a larger life. Since he came to bring a more abundant life to those living on earth, it seems reasonable that he called back those departed ones because it meant a larger life to the families from whom death had taken them. We know this was true in the case of the widow of Nain's son. It is

pathetically stated that he was the only son of that widowed mother. And of course Martha and Mary needed very much their one brother Lazarus. It is not stated whether or not Jairus had other children besides the little twelve year old girl Jesus restored to them, but it is self-evident that her coming back meant a much larger life for her parents, at least for their immediate future.

The New Testament doctrine of resurrection in itself proves that death does not mean going into "the larger life". Resurrection means a resurgence, a rising up. This implies that those who die go to some place of being below that on which dwell people in earthly tabernacles. Why any need of a resurrection if the dead by dying have gone into a larger life? This question is so difficult of answer it is no wonder that we hear from pulpits but little or nothing about a resurrection in these days.

"The heavens declare the glory of God". "For thy pleasure they are and were created". All of which is to say that the Creator sought and found for himself a larger life by creating this material universe. And it seems well nigh forgotten by present day worshippers of death that man was placed on this planet to "replenish the earth and subdue it". If disembodied ghosts had been equal to such a material task it would doubtless have been assigned to such. The promise is that "the righteous shall inherit the earth". And Jesus said, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth". If earth life is truly a blessed state, why is it not a worthy aspira-

tion to want to overcome death and remain here and find our larger life on the earth? We have scarcely touched the hem of the garment of the larger life that is possible on this earth.

The earth itself is small, but large enough for a base of operations. We have access here to the limitless universe. We can enlarge our lives in many ways, dwelling in these "earthly tabernacles", so "fearfully and wonderfully made". "The whole is greater than its parts". It ought to be accepted as a self-evident fact that a larger life is possible to body, soul and spirit holding intact than to a bodiless spirit. The poet Browning realized this when he sang, "How good is man's life, the mere living. How fit to employ All the heart and the soul and the senses forever in joy".

A larger life is possible to each of us through each of our five physical senses. Through the eye alone, aided by the cunning of the two hands, the telescope and the microscope open to us limitless universes in two directions. We are very soon to have a more farreaching view of the material universe through the monster eye recently made at Corning, New York, and now on the Pacific coast being polished for a telescope to be installed on Mount Paloma. When so installed and turned on the moon we are told it will make that body seem not more than twenty five miles away, and more distant bodies in that proportion. It will doubtless tell us whether or not Mars is inhabited, and reveal wonders on

other planets of our solar system, and on Old Sol himself not hitherto known.

And there is every indication that we are ere long to realize a larger life by actually visiting and exploring some of the other planets of our solar system. The urge aviators have to pierce the stratosphere, and to make records for staying up in the clouds are indications of what is coming in the future.

At the present stage of human progress, a voyage through the ether to the moon and back to earth would scarcely be a greater wonder than was the voyage of Columbus from Spain to San Salvador and back at the stage of progress attained up to his time. From present indications, I believe we are safe in predicting that the day is not distant when great aerial hospitals will be in use, especially for patients with any kind of lung disorder. Such hospitals will seek and find that particular stratum of the atmosphere needed by any particular class of patients. We are likely also to have summer hotels with a cool place to sleep in the hot season for anybody and everybody.

While I do not wish to be understood as trying to do away with the supernatural, I will say that St. Paul's vision of the saints "caught up to meet the Lord in the air" may come to pass in a very natural way. It may be that Paul just got a flash in his vision of a great future aerial civilization. Paul expected this meeting the Lord in the air to take place in his time. Necessarily, a distant future event

to any one capable of seeing it at all, would seem to be near, just as does a distant object seen through a telescope. Seen through the monster glass eye now being polished in California, as I have previously stated, the moon is to appear not more than twenty five miles away. No, it is not necessary to die in order to enter into "the larger life".

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XI

MEANING OF "OVERCOMETH"

"He that overcometh shall inherit these things". What things? Those listed earlier in the passage—new heaven, new earth, new Jerusalem. New era in which there is no death, no mourning or crying, no pain.

The King James Version reads, "shall inherit *all* things", general rather than particular, as we find it in the Revised Version. I have pointed out in a previous chapter the fact that through several centuries the full meaning of this passage was permitted by the Spirit of truth to be partly concealed by an imperfect translation, for the probable reason that mankind was not yet "able to bear" the full truth about the overcoming of death. Now that a clearer understanding of the passage comes through a correct translation, it would seem now to be only a matter of fully understanding just what it means to "overcome" in order to escape physical death. Again the matter rests with the Spirit of truth. Any persons living today whose evolution in consciousness is not sufficiently advanced to put them past the need of continued dying, will not fully comprehend the meaning of "overcome", and so some time will die.

Should I perchance be one of these, I feel I can be better reconciled to my lot by having left behind my testimony in the matter. I have stated that I am a candidate for immortality of body, soul and spirit. I am daily imploring the Spirit of truth to make clear to me just what it means to "overcome" and aid me in realizing by experience all that it means.

I sincerely believe the time is come for somebody to call attention to the inconsistencies between certain current interpretations of Scripture regarding life in a body and the cessation of such life, called death, and conduct prompted by common life instincts. For instance. Sickness comes into a Christian home. The most skilled physicians and nurses are called. Despite their best efforts, the case is lost. Then at the funeral service we are told that it was the will of God that the efforts of the physician and nurse failed, that the soul of the departed has gone into the "larger life". In other words, the attitude of Christendom is to treat death as both an enemy and a friend.

The Greek word translated "overcometh" is in some places translated "conquereth". Jesus said we should be of good cheer because he had overcome the world. He had conquered the cosmos.

Earlier in this writing I have pointed out that the force of a race habit has to be reckoned with in the effort to overcome death. This habit is very deeply rooted in the human subconscious. But if I correctly interpret the pas-

sage we are studying, that habit can be overcome, and the time to be diligently working towards that overcoming is now, for these last words in the Bible about death are declared "faithful and true", and already "come to pass".

XII

“WHY THOUGHT A THING INCREDIBLE?”

The Apostle Paul once had occasion to ask the question, “Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you that God should raise the dead?” Just as pertinent is the question today, “Why should it be thought a thing incredible with us that God should keep the living alive?”

For proof that such a thought is not “a thing incredible”, we have only to consult the writings of this same Paul. In his first epistle to the Corinthians he records a sublime vision of the future in which figures a race of human beings, kept alive by the power of God in whom “is the fountain of life”. And I submit that it is a fair inference that every individual member of that living race he saw must have each individually and personally overcome death. Such a state of race perfection, as I have noted in a previous chapter, I conceive as a necessary prerequisite to the resurrection of the dead. Such a living race will then be on a higher plane of existence than the righteous dead—“those who sleep in Jesus”—else why the term “raised” as applied to the dead?

In this same sublime vision Paul designated death as an enemy, and said it would be the last enemy to

be destroyed. Let us note carefully that he did call death an enemy, and did say positively that it would be destroyed. Destroyed when, and where? No one can say when, in terms of earth trips around the sun, but it is not rationally conceivable that it is to be destroyed anywhere else than right here on the earth where it has held sway through so many millenniums, holding back our race from its intended goal.

As I write these pages, in the springtime of this year of grace 1938, this earth planet is the arena of divers wars and rumors of wars between peoples and nations. But over and above all in importance, over the same territory, is the war between life and death. This war has been going on since the first human pair were turned out of Eden, and began peopling the earth with their offspring. Here let us reverently remind ourselves that death entered this earth arena in the first place contrary to the will of God. That is to say, the human body, so "fearfully and wonderfully made", was never made to die, though was, in the Creator's wisdom, made capable of dying. But this enemy of life is still much in evidence, and God's will can never "be done on earth as it is done in heaven"—that is to say, the Lord's prayer can never be answered until death is destroyed. And is it conceivable that Jesus would teach his disciples to pray a prayer that could not be answered?

Sometimes it happens that an army in a war between nations is much hampered by the voluntary

surrender of some of its officers and soldiers to the enemy. That, though a humiliating fact to admit, is what has happened in the ranks of the Christian army in the war against death. This surrender was not intentional. It appears to have been accomplished almost unconsciously on the part of Christians. The more abundant life brought to mankind by the Christ so quickened human sensibilities that the sorrow incident to the separation from dear ones caused by death became next to unbearable. Divine grace alone seems not to have been sufficient, so a mental and spiritual sedative was sought—and, strange to say, found it in the fallacious belief that death is after all not an enemy but a friend. "Death is the gate to endless joy", sang the poet Watts, and that sentiment permeates today the bulk of our entire church hymnology and ritual.

"An unintentional surrender to the enemy", I have said, but it is none the less a surrender, and we might almost call it an unconditional surrender. This "mental and spiritual anaesthetic" is wholly without Scriptural foundation. Jesus, who was the Logos "made flesh and dwelt among us", neither by word or deed, ever gave any encouragement to the fantastic fallacy that "death is the gate to endless joy". Whatever that "gate" opens into, he called certain persons back through it to resume earth life again. To Him, death was a heart-breaking affair. About all the consolation he ever ventured in regard to it, was that we should "fear not them which kill the body but cannot kill the soul", and in the assur-

ance to the believer, "I will raise him up at the last day."

But he did come back to earth about a generation after his ascension into heaven and inaugurate a new dispensation, in which he said death should be no more, the reality of which New Dispensation I have tried to emphasize in preceding chapters. I have tried to point out what appeared to me plausible reasons why Christendom has been so slow in accepting this New Patmos Dispensation as a reality. One may well wonder why God has not sent forth some "Golden-mouthed" Chrysostom, or some thundering Luther to urge acceptance of the New Dispensation and its glorious benefits. In addition to reasons given for delay, I will add that because the belief in the "bliss of dying" did serve undeveloped Christians as a soothing anaesthetic, God just listed the ages since the Patmos decree as another of those "times of ignorance" He had hitherto "winked at".

But, may I ask reverently, How long is God likely to continue to "wink at" our delay as a race to enter fully into the New Dispensation proclaimed at Patmos some Nineteen Hundred years ago? If some visitor from Mars or some other planet would come among us and tell us that our present Twentieth Century times were still "times of ignorance" his charge, in the annual Commencement season would be eloquently resented in thousands of baccalaureate sermons and Commencement orations.

In this connection I venture a few plain words to the young "theologues" who yearly graduate

from our several Divinity Schools. In the case of most of you, a high school and college course preceded your Theological course. Some of you have specialized in what is known as the new psychology. You know the power of suggestion—how it causes the sub-conscious mind to react the “suggestions” it receives, upon the human body. For aught I know some of you may have had part in that prank attributed to a bunch of college boys, in which an old fruit vendor was made “sick-a-bed” by a concerted plot to tell the old fellow that he was not looking well. He protested at first that he “never felt better in his life”, but after having received the same “suggestion” from a half dozen boys at different stations, he succumbed and took to his bed.

If you cannot exactly accept my exegesis in the first seven verses of Chapter 21 of the Book of Revelation, you do all know that under the present world wide teaching of the Church, physical death in the human family will be self-perpetuating, regardless of what the will of God may be. If you could only plead ignorance, God might “wink” at it, and you would not be responsible for continued false teaching. But you are enlightened, and “where much is given, much shall also be required”.

I have said in preceding pages of this work that I am a candidate for immortality of body, soul and spirit. But if I should fail completely to “overcome”—that is to say, fail to “practice my own preaching” to this complete extent, I would regard it as the next best thing if I can live to see some leader,

or set of leaders, come forth from our schools of learning and call a modern Christian Council for the purpose of giving the world an expurgated ritual and hymnal, leaving out all glorification and worship of death, and all affirmations as to the brevity of life and inevitableness of death—such, for instance, as “In the midst of life we are in death”.

Let me assure you that this interpretation of Revelation XXI: 1-7 found in these pages is no new fad or fancy with this writer. He is now close to fourscore, and through fully half his present earth life has been protesting against the common interpretation of this passage, which applies it to some future time and world. This statement can be verified by other writings of his.

I would like to see some kind of a Christian assembly with authority and courage to give us a statement of Christian belief in harmony with Christian practice, and consistent with the fundamental instincts of corporeal human life.

Let me illustrate: Less than a dozen years ago I lived in a community in which a neighbor, a young man about thirty, became ill with some kind of an internal trouble, and was taken to a hospital in a large city for a surgical operation. In spite of all that skilled physicians and trained nurses could do, the young man died. His remains were brought home and funeral services were held in the village church. The pastor in his discourse said the young man had gone into “the larger life”, and was much “better off” than any of us who sat in his audience.

This was of course about what is usually said on such occasions. The good pastor was trying to console the bereaved members of the family of the departed. To say nothing of the lack of Scriptural warrant for what he said, his statement would imply that it is wrong to establish hospitals and train doctors and nurses, since they may prevent sick people from entering into the "larger life". The hospital which had tried to save this young man's life was endowed and equipped by the same denomination which the pastor who conducted the funeral belonged to.

This denomination, one of the largest, also endows schools for training ministers. One wonders why there could not be more manifest harmony between the preaching taught at the Divinity School and the practice at the hospital, both under the same denominational auspices.

Science and Governments are doing much to carry out that ancient Patmos Decree. Besides steadily increasing the average length of human life, the discovery of anaesthetics has done much to prevent pain. Truly those Patmos words, long ago "come to pass" in the invisible, are gradually coming to pass in the visible. "Why should it be thought a thing incredible?"

THE END.

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